

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Page 1, after the title insert the following:

This application is the US national phase of international application **PCT/FI2003/000601** filed **12 August 2003** which designated the U.S. and claims benefit of **FR 02/10260**, dated **13 August 2002**, the entire content of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

**Page 3, before line 30, insert the following new paragraph:**

The document EP 0454104 A1 describes a biodegradable latex web material. The web can contain synthetic fibers to improve the tear strength of the material and in order to improve the tensile strength, the fibrous web is saturated with a latex composition which may be natural, synthetic or a combination of natural and synthetic polymers. Examples of natural polymers are starches, proteins and gums. The above materials, according to the document, when mulched in aerobic soil, rapidly decompose in as short a time as two to three months.

**Page 4, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 4 with the following new paragraph:**

To do this, the invention proposes a biodegradable fibrous support for mulching of the soil for long-term growing periods of up to 36 months, said fibrous support being coated with an aqueous solution comprising biodegradable natural latex, where the aqueous solution comprises from 5 to 50 % by weight of biodegradable natural latex

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obtained from rubber tree, the balance to 100 % including water, and stabilizing and preservative agents of said latex, the solution forming, on the support, a coating of 10 to 200 g/m<sup>2</sup> as dry matter of latex, advantageously from 90 to 100 g/m<sup>2</sup>, said preservative agents being chosen from the group comprising animal or vegetable proteins, such as glycerin; or chitosan, or tannins or indigo by themselves or as a mixture.